



Projet Muinda Pour la Paix

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A Tournament Makes All the Difference

While visiting Project Muinda in Kinshasa, D. R. Congo, in February 2011, Gianne Broughton, staff of Canadian Friends Service Committee, visited with several Peace Cells to hear the stories of their work. This story took place in Ngaliema neighbourhood where a lot of people had spontaneously organized soccer teams that would play against each other as the opportunity

(photo has been temporarily removed)

Members of the Ngaliema Peace Cell and the Project Muinda in February 2011.

arose. The various teams developed followings, and rivalries became intense. Violence began to be a problem, especially during and after games where some aspect of play was disputed. One of the members of the Ngaliema Peace Cell is a gifted organizer, and also an avid soccer player. With the moral support of the other Peace Cell members, he gathered together the leaders of the various teams and proposed a well-regulated tournament. Skeptics' objections were overcome, and tasks were shared out. On Tournament Day, all the arrangements were realized.

Every team was able to play every other team, referees and officials were fair, results were tabulated and posted clearly, and there was no violence. The participants were so excited and encouraged by the results that they organized a regular house league, and annual tournaments that continue to this day, with few violent incidents. The Peace Cell members now mostly stay on the sidelines.